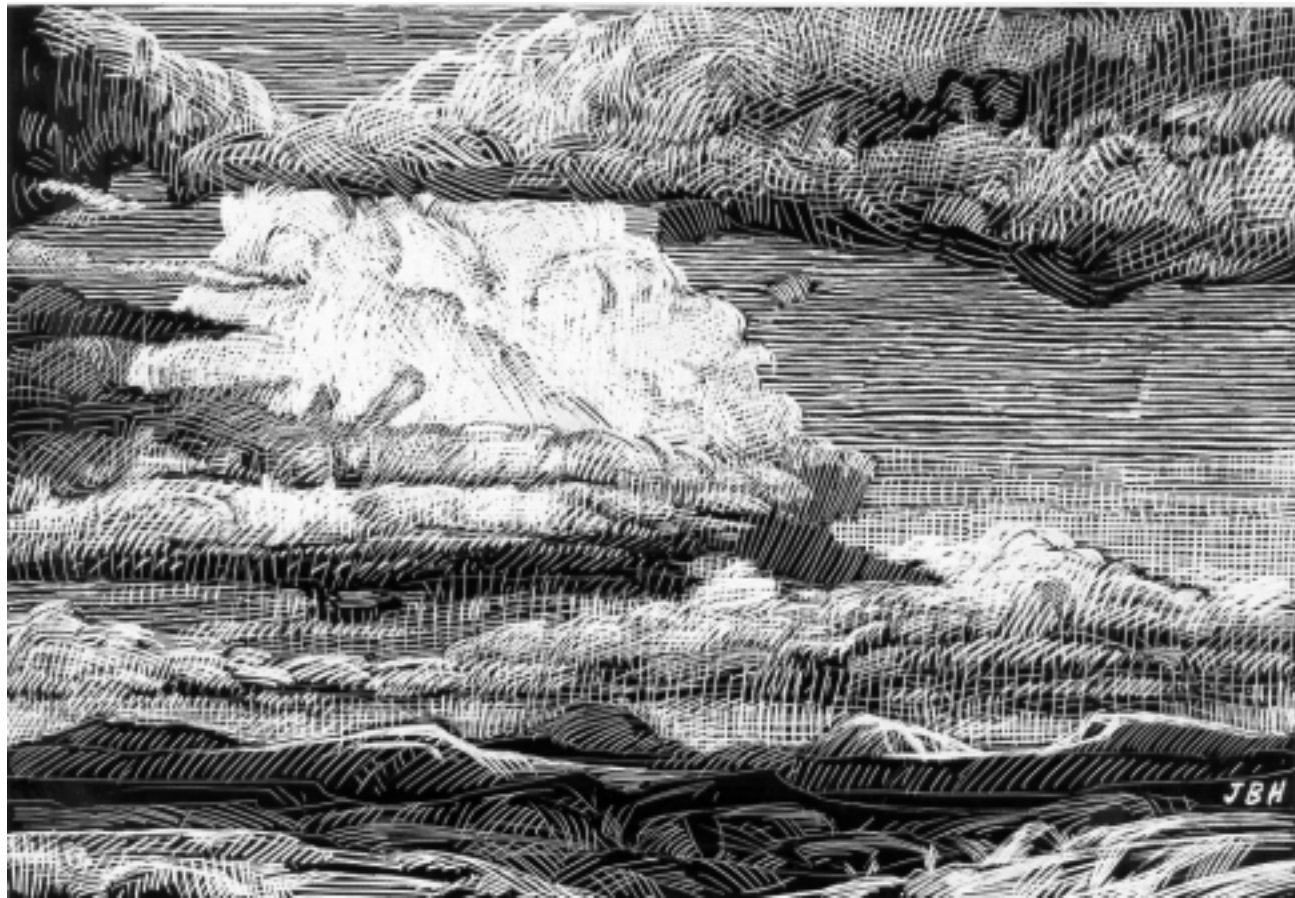


Chapter I

Purpose and Need for the Plan



CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was established on September 18, 1996, when President Clinton issued a Proclamation (Appendix 1) under the provisions of the Antiquities Act of 1906 (Appendix 2). The Monument was created to protect a spectacular array of scientific, historic, biological, geological, paleontological, and archaeological objects. These treasures, individually and collectively, in the context of the natural environment that supports and protects them, are the “Monument resources” discussed throughout this plan. The terms “Monument values” and “Monument objects” have also been used, but because the term “Monument resources” may be more easily understood, it will be used throughout this document.

The Proclamation, which is the principal direction for management of the Monument, clearly dictates that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) protect these resources. All other considerations are secondary to that edict. The management alternatives presented in this plan are necessarily constrained to those affording the required protection. As a result, the range of alternatives presented in this planning

document for the Monument is narrower than is typical of BLM management plans.

The Proclamation governs how the provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) will be applied within the Monument. FLPMA directs the BLM to manage public land on the basis of multiple use and “in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historic, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values.” The term “multiple use” refers to the “harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment.” Multiple use involves managing an area for various benefits, recognizing that the establishment of land use priorities and exclusive uses in certain areas are necessary to ensure that multiple uses can occur harmoniously across a landscape.

The Proclamation, FLPMA, and other mandates provide the direction for the preparation of this management plan. Within this guidance, many decisions remain about how best to protect Monument resources and address the major issues surrounding Monument management.

The Presidential Proclamation directed the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a plan in

order to begin making those decisions. The plan will guide management activities within the Monument and allow for the use and protection of Monument resources. It will achieve these goals in a manner that creates opportunities for public exploration and education, sets a precedent for progressive public land stewardship, incorporates input from the scientific community and the public at large, and reflects the national significance of these resources, consistent with the Monument’s contribution to our natural and cultural heritage. The results of the Monument planning process to date are presented in this Draft Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

PLANNING PROCESS

The Presidential Proclamation directed that a Monument Management Plan be completed by September 1999. To meet this objective, the BLM established a planning team based in Cedar City, Utah. In order to more fully include the State of Utah and local governments in this effort, Secretary Babbitt invited Governor Leavitt to nominate several members of the planning team. The Governor proposed five professionals who became part of the planning team. The 15 member planning team was assembled in the spring of 1997 to begin this inclusive

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planning process designed to guide the Monument into the next century.

The purpose of this plan is to provide both a set of decisions outlining management and to create a framework for future planning and decision-making. It is expected that in the future, there will be a need for subsequent and more detailed planning, which will focus on specific geographic areas or on specific management issues.

In each subsequent activity plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document, the BLM will include a description of the desired future condition of the land involved, and will explain how the activities being planned for would contribute to that desired future condition.

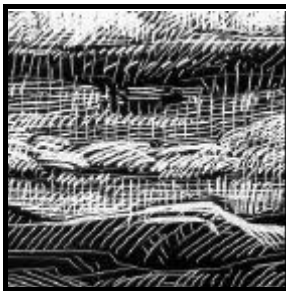


Figure 1.1 illustrates the current planning process which is described in the subsequent paragraphs.

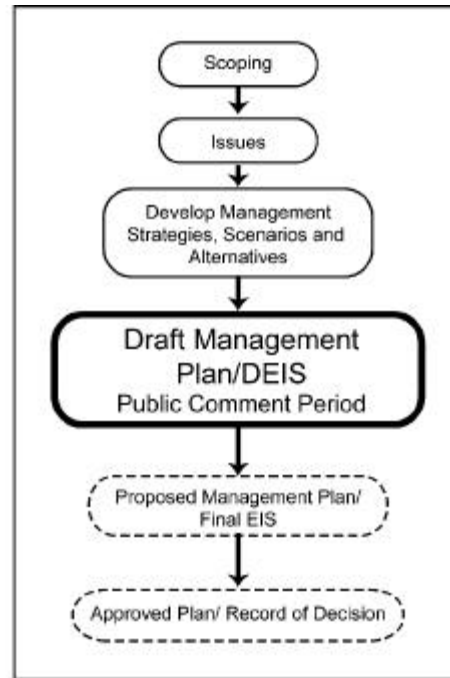


Figure 1.1 Overview of the Planning Process

SCOPING PROCESS

The first step in the planning process was to invite public participation. This “scoping” process invited a wide range of public comment to determine the significant issues to be addressed in the plan. The formal scoping period began with publication of the Notice of Intent to produce a Management Plan, which appeared in the Federal Register on July 8, 1997 (Volume 62, No. 130, Pg. 36570).

The scoping process invited public input through a questionnaire, e-mail, the Internet, and public workshops. Fifteen public workshops were held in seven states and the District of Columbia between August 12 and October 16, 1997. Several thousand scoping comments were received, with comments from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A complete outline of the scoping process is found in Chapter 5.

ISSUES

One of the most important outcomes of the scoping process was the identification of the significant issues to be addressed in the plan. For planning purposes, an “issue” is defined as a matter of controversy, dispute, or general concern over resource management activities, the environment, or land uses. In essence, issues help determine what decisions will be

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made in the plan and what the environmental analysis must address (via an EIS, as required by NEPA).

Based on the scoping comments received and subsequent analysis and evaluation, seven major planning issues were identified. Those issues are listed below with a short description of why each is significant, as well as decisions regarding each issue that must be made in the plan.

In addition to the seven issues identified in scoping, the plan will address basic environmental and management issues including air quality, water quality, and soils management.

The planning issues identified in scoping are as follows:

Issue 1: How will Monument resources be protected?

The Presidential Proclamation establishing the Monument identified an array of scientific and historic objects to be protected. These geological, paleontological, archeological, biological, and historic objects, individually and collectively, in the context of the natural environment that supports and protects them, are considered Monument resources. The term “Monument values” has also been used. However, the term “Monument resources”

may be more easily understood and will therefore be used throughout this document. There are various ways of protecting such resources, including educating visitors, restricting access, setting research priorities, restoring degraded ecological conditions, or some combination of approaches. Decisions about which approaches would be used under each management alternative are outlined in Chapter 2 of this document.

Issue 2: How will research associated with the Monument be managed?

Science and history are at the very heart of the Proclamation establishing the Monument. Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument provides an opportunity to explore Monument ecosystems, and to conduct social, natural, cultural, and physical science studies. There are many possibilities for managing research to take advantage of such opportunities. Details such as how the scientific agenda for the Monument will be determined, how access for researchers will be managed, and how research will interact with recreation are some of the research issues addressed under each management alternative. The public will have substantial access to research information under every action alternative, but the manner in which that information would be provided varies by alternative.

Issue 3: How will Monument management be integrated with community plans?

Both local and Native American Indian communities near the Monument have contemporary and historic ties to lands within the Monument. These communities make a valuable contribution to our national heritage and to the quality of visitor experience. In addition to dealing with land management issues, the plan discusses the need for continued cooperation between the Monument and these communities.

Issue 4: How will people’s activities and uses be managed?

The activities of visitors are recognized as having a profound effect on the Monument environment as well as on local communities surrounding the Monument. Management of those activities is crucial in protecting Monument resources. Decisions such as: where and what kind of interpretation and visitor services to provide, how to manage uses such as rights-of-way, utility lines, outfitter and guide services, communication sites, and fuelwood cutting, and how to reduce conflicts between user groups are all important elements addressed in the alternatives. This plan also addresses the treatment of valid existing rights in place when the Monument was established; that treatment is the same in all alternatives.

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Issue 5: What facilities are needed and where?

Facilities for the Monument include all structures for visitors, administration, and research. As a result of extensive public comment, the plan assumes that a single, large-scale office/visitor center is neither feasible nor desirable, and that major facilities will be located outside the Monument boundaries in communities around the perimeter of the Monument. However, other facility-related decisions are essential to managing visitors and researchers and to protecting Monument resources. These include decisions about the type and location of interpretive sites, campground and day use facilities, the use of temporary facilities, and the type and location of science, research, and administrative facilities.

Issue 6: How will transportation and access be managed?

A network of roads and trails currently provides access to many areas of the Monument. Decisions about improving or restricting access in the Monument are addressed in the management alternatives.

Issue 7: To what extent is water necessary for the proper care and management of the objects of the Monument, and what further action is necessary to assure the availability of water?

The Proclamation directed the Secretary to address “the extent to which water is necessary for the proper care and management of the objects of this monument and the extent to which further action may be necessary, pursuant to Federal or State law, to assure the availability of water.” A discussion of those subjects is included in Chapter 2, in Management Common to All Alternatives, and in Chapter 3. Other water related discussions are included in the management alternatives, and as appropriate, throughout the document.

OTHER ISSUES

Management Common to All Alternatives

There are several other important issues raised in scoping which are clearly of concern to the public, but which have already been decided by the Proclamation, or are governed by existing laws and regulations. Because management of these issues has already been determined through the Proclamation, law, or regulation, management alternatives for those issues are not presented in this plan. Nevertheless, those issues are discussed in

detail in the “Management Common to All Alternatives” section in Chapter 2.

Issues discussed in the Management Common to All Alternatives section of Chapter 2 include:

- C Management of livestock grazing
- C Management of Wilderness Study Areas
- C Management of valid existing rights (e.g., mining claims, mineral leases)
- C Management of fish and wildlife (including hunting and fishing) by the State of Utah
- C Management of existing withdrawals, reservations, and appropriations

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended, provides for protection of outstanding river resources. It requires the identification and study of rivers or portions of rivers, and directs Federal agencies to cooperate with state governments. Section 5(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides that wild and scenic river considerations be made during Federal agency planning. Either Congress, or the Secretary of the Interior on the nomination of the Governor of Utah, may designate rivers as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. It is the responsibility of the BLM to make recommendations and complete appropriate environmental studies through the

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planning process. Pursuant to this mandate, the Monument planning team has completed an evaluation of river resources inside the Monument. Recommendations on specific river segments can be found in Chapter 2, by alternative.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated

There were several management alternatives suggested during scoping which were eliminated from detailed analysis because they were not deemed reasonable given the constraints of the Proclamation, or for other reasons. Those alternatives, and the reasons they were eliminated, are discussed in detail in the “Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis” section at the end of Chapter 2. They include:

- C No Livestock Grazing
- C Full Recreation Development
- C Maximize Wilderness--Recommendation of Suitable Wilderness for Congressional Designation
- C Full Field Mineral Development (Oil and Gas, Coal Development, and Hard Rock Mineral Development)
- C Designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- C Natural Ecosystem
- C Support Local Communities

DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ALTERNATIVES

Defining the planning issues was the first step in narrowing the scope of possible actions that would be carried forward into the planning process. The planning team then developed management strategies aimed at providing viable options for addressing the planning issues. The management strategies provided the building blocks from which the general management scenarios, and eventually, the more detailed management alternatives, were developed. The result of this process is the range of management alternatives provided in this Draft Management Plan/DEIS

SUMMARY OF PLANNING CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS

The process described above was designed to identify a viable range of management alternatives given the comments and issues identified during public scoping. At the same time, the different legal requirements and directives governing the planning process were considered in determining the range of management alternatives and in developing the framework for the Draft Management

Plan/DEIS. The following is a summary of key planning considerations:

PROCLAMATION

The Presidential Proclamation (Proclamation 6920, September 18, 1996):

The Proclamation (Appendix 1), enacted under the Antiquities Act of 1906 (Appendix 2), established the Monument, described the purposes of the Monument, and made certain provisions for its management, including:

- C Federal lands within the Monument are withdrawn from new mineral location or mineral leasing.
- C Federal lands within the Monument boundaries will remain in public ownership, unless exchanged for lands that would further protect Monument resources.
- C Establishment of the Monument is subject to valid existing rights.
- C Establishment of the Monument does not diminish the responsibility and authority of the State of Utah for management of fish and wildlife, including regulation of hunting and fishing, on Federal lands within the Monument.
- C Livestock grazing shall continue to be governed by applicable laws and regulations other than the Proclamation.
- C Existing withdrawals, reservations, or appropriations are not revoked by the

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Proclamation, but such uses must be managed to protect Monument resources.

- C Water is not reserved as a matter of Federal law. The plan must address the extent to which water is necessary for the proper care and management of the objects of the Monument and the extent to which further action may be necessary pursuant to Federal or State law to assure the availability of water.

FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACTS

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended:

Development of the management plan is guided by the legal authority found in FLPMA and NEPA. In developing land use plans, FLPMA and NEPA require that the BLM use an interdisciplinary approach and provide opportunities for public involvement and interagency coordination. In addition, FLPMA requires land use plans to:

- C give priority to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- C consider the present and potential uses of the public lands

- C consider the scarcity of values involved
- C rely on public lands inventories
- C comply with pollution-control laws; and
- C manage Wilderness Study Areas to ensure that their potential wilderness values are not impaired

Both NEPA and FLPMA require the BLM to provide the public with information about the effects of implementing land use plans.

Since the passage of FLPMA, the BLM identified certain areas, now within the Monument, for wilderness review. These areas, called Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and Instant Study Areas (ISAs), have been managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP) (BLM Manual H-8550-1) since they were identified. The objective of the IMP is to manage those lands so as not to impair their suitability for designation as wilderness. The WSAs and ISAs within the Monument will continue to be managed under the IMP, and the Monument Management Plan will only be carried out to the extent that it does not conflict with the IMP, until action is taken by Congress. If Congress decides not to designate the WSA lands as wilderness, the lands would then be managed under the provisions of the Monument Management Plan.

PLANNING CRITERIA

In addition to the planning considerations of the Proclamation and FLPMA, BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all resource management plans. Planning criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable law, agency guidance, public comment, and coordination with other Federal, state and local governments, and Native American Indian tribes.

The planning criteria used in developing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Management Plan are as follows:

- C The plan will be completed in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws. It will meet the requirement of the Proclamation to protect the objects of geological, paleontological, archaeological, biological and historic value within the Monument. However, the full extent of the Monument's resources are not yet known.
- C The Monument Planning Team will work cooperatively with the State of Utah, tribal governments, county and municipal governments, other Federal agencies, and all other interested groups, agencies and individuals.

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- C The Monument plan will establish the guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing the Monument.
- C The planning process will include an Environmental Impact Statement that will comply with National Environmental Policy Act standards.
- C The plan will emphasize the scientific and historic resources of the Monument. It will also identify opportunities and priorities for research and education related to the resources for which the Monument was created. In addition, it will describe an approach for incorporating research into management actions.
- C Due to the size of the Monument, the number of entry points, the importance of emphasizing local community involvement in visitor services, the need to assure managerial efficiencies, and the overwhelming response during scoping, the plan will assume that a single large scale office/visitor center is neither feasible nor desirable. Major facilities and services, whenever possible, will be located in nearby communities, outside the Monument boundaries, with locations based upon considerations such as the social, economic, and infrastructure factors in surrounding communities, and the need to facilitate effective management.
- C The plan will set forth a framework for managing recreational activities to provide

for enjoyment of visitor experiences consistent with the Proclamation.

- C The plan will recognize valid existing rights within the Monument and review how valid existing rights are verified. The plan will also outline the process the Bureau of Land Management will use to address applications or notices filed after completion of the plan on existing claims or other land use authorizations.
- C The management of grazing is regulated by laws and regulations other than the Proclamation. The plan will incorporate the statewide standards and guidelines recommended by the Utah Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Council and accepted by the Secretary of Interior. It will lay out a strategy for ensuring that proper grazing practices are followed within the Monument. In addition, the plan will outline the subsequent NEPA and decision making processes that the BLM will follow to manage grazing within the Monument.
- C The plan will directly involve Native American Indian tribal governments by providing strategies for the protection of recognized traditional uses.
- C The lifestyles of area residents, including the activities of grazing and hunting, will be recognized in the Monument Plan.
- C The plan will not address boundary adjustments. Boundaries were established

by the President and cannot be adjusted administratively.

- C The plan will recognize the State's responsibility to manage wildlife, including hunting and fishing, within the Monument.
- C Resolution of the State land inholding issue is a priority for the Department of the Interior and the BLM, and is being addressed separately from the management plan. Both state and private inholdings within the Monument are covered by the analysis in this document, although this draft document does not propose decisions for acquisition or management of these lands. If the BLM acquires these lands, they will be managed consistent with the plan, subject to any constraints associated with the acquisition.
- C The plan will address transportation and access, and will identify where better access is warranted, where access should remain as is, and where decreased access is appropriate to protect Monument resources and manage visitation.



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SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS PROPOSED IN THE PLAN

The Monument Management Plan provides a broad array of decisions concerning major resource management issues, especially in the action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E). The decisions vary among the respective alternatives, and their level of specificity also differs. As in the case of any resource management plan, it is expected that subsequent activity planning will occur, consistent with the guidance included in this plan, in order to make decisions on individual activities or classes of activities. For example, this could include the management of outfitter and guide services in a given area, or allowances for designated primitive camping. The most significant areas in which this plan offers decisions include:

- C designation of open routes
- C major visitor facilities
- C minor visitor facilities
- C cross-country vehicle travel
- C Wild and Scenic River recommendations
- C Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- C recreation management
- C collection of objects
- C air quality
- C water quality

- C water development
- C vegetation management
- C scientific research activities

There are several areas for which major decisions have been deferred. For example, livestock grazing will ultimately be addressed after the completion of assessments for each grazing allotment and the preparation of new allotment management plans. Although the Monument Management Plan will be a factor in decisions that result from such activities, along with current BLM regulations and applicable law and policy, the plan does not present such decisions. Similarly, the plan does not offer recommendations for new Wilderness Study Areas or recommendations for legislative action regarding existing Wilderness Study Areas. It was infeasible to address these resource decisions in this plan due to a variety of constraints, including the timetable mandated by the President for the plan's preparation, as well as the need for enhanced baseline data and analysis of such data. The plan also does not make specific decisions concerning valid existing rights, which may be asserted in the future under various authorities. Instead, as outlined in Chapter 2, the BLM will periodically verify the status of valid existing rights. When an action is proposed pursuant to any of them, the BLM will analyze its potential impacts to provide a basis for decision making.

WHAT'S NEXT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Availability of this Draft Management Plan/DEIS was announced in the Federal Register and in local media. Publication of the Notice of Availability opens a comment period for the public to submit comments on the draft. During this period, public meetings will be held in locations and at times announced in the letter accompanying this document and in local media.

After analysis and consideration of public comment on the draft, the Proposed Monument Management Plan/Final EIS is expected to be released in the summer of 1999. Opportunities to protest proposed decisions will be provided in accordance with BLM regulations and policies. The Approved Monument Management Plan is expected to be completed by September 1999.